

SUNRISE BOULEVARD

A Mystery in Two Acts

By Craig Sodaro

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Leave It to Daddy is the most popular family show of the early '70s. Each week millions tune in to see how Daddy will solve the Grady family problems. So it's a national tragedy when Rob Murray, who plays Daddy, is murdered by none other than his TV wife, Norma Dredful. Dredful, of course, proclaims her innocence. Even the grand jury can't find enough evidence to indict, despite Detective Wright's eagle-eye. But America has convicted the actress who goes into seclusion in the very house where the show was filmed and the murder took place.

Twenty years later, Flo and Patty, fresh from college, are determined to do a story on Norma Dredful. They finagle their way into her house and convince the actress, despite protests from her faithful butler, Max, to allow them to tell her side of the story. And what a success! The country has forgotten and forgiven, and even Cecil B. LaPill, the great producer, is willing to give Norma a role in his upcoming big-screen version of *Leave It to Daddy*.

But, some old wounds don't heal. Norma's bitter TV children, Randall, Inez, and Dot, pay her a visit and let her know she ruined their lives. When the show was canceled, so were their careers. Norma handles all the detractors gracefully until one of them decides to blackmail her.

It's then that Norma decides enough is enough. She agrees to meet the blackmailer, but déjà vu! She ends up shooting the upstart. And, just as she had been twenty years earlier, she's caught red-handed with a corpse, a weapon, a motive, and plenty of opportunity. Digby Wright now gets a second shot at Norma. Can he bring her to justice this time?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 M, 14 W)

ROB MURRAY (DADDY) - Forties, a fatherly actor who always knows what's best.

RANDALL GREGG (BOBBY) - An actor of limited range who can play the bad boy better than anything.

NORMA DREDFUL (MOMMY) - America's favorite TV mom until murder knocks her from her throne, creating a bitter, cynical lady.

DOT FERRIS (SUSIE) - Perennially young actress whose youthful appearance hides a fierce need for love.

INEZ REESE (DARLENE) - A solid performer who always plays the decent older sister. But is she?

MAX - The faithful stage manager and later the even more faithful butler.

HILLARY GILLARY - Her Hollywood gossip gets to the bottom of the story no matter how slimy the bottom can get.

ROZ DeBLOZ - Hillary's rival and some time partner, she'll scrape whatever Hillary left off the bottom of the barrel.

DETECTIVE DIGBY WRIGHT - The ever-cautious, naive policeman who ploddingly peels layer after layer to get to the truth.

EVE POTTER - Wright's hard-boiled partner with a heart of gold.

PATTY MAYFIELD - A fresh college graduate nervous about attacking the world as a professional photographer.

FLO GEREAU - Her friend, a new journalist with a nose for news and the nerve to match.

LATICIA - Fashionable secretary to a great film producer.

CECIL B. LaPILL - The great film producer.

VELMA LEOPARD - A washed-up actress who had one good series.

WILL CASH - A washed-up actor who had one good series.

GRETA STREET - A washed-up actress who had one good series.

CORDELIA - A bag lady.

NURSE CARTER - A bubble-headed young lady.

CHERRIE - A French maid.

NOTE: One actress can play the parts of Cordelia, Nurse Carter and Cherrie, for a very good reason!

SETTING

Several scenes are played before the curtain and require no set. The living and dining rooms of the Grady house, awash in 70s decor: shag carpet, hanging bubble lamp, avocado accents, macramé plant hangers, and so on. A patio door USL opens to a visible backyard patio, complete with grill. A curtain covers half the door. DSL entrance leads to foyer and stairway to bedrooms upstairs. Entrance DSR leads to other rooms of the house. Dining area is at SR, furnished with a table and six chairs. Living room at SL has small couch or two chairs grouped with table between them placed CSL. Several other chairs dot the room, along with an old TV with rabbit ears setting DSL facing UPS. Colorful hand-knit throws accent the furniture. Plants further decorate the room.

See additional notes at the end of the playbook.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: ROB { Daddy} stands far right at head of table. Sitting facing audience in typical TV family fashion are NORMA, INEZ, RANDALL and DOT.)

ROB: So, Bobby, do you understand the point I've been trying to make?

RANDALL: I sure have, Dad.

NORMA: And what IS the point, son?

RANDALL: Well, Mom, it was wrong to steal Judge Ferris' car.

BOB: Even if -

RANDALL: Even if I just wanted it to go over to Betty Sue's house.

DOT: Gosh, you and Betty Sue? Yuck!

NORMA: Now, Susie, your brother's growing up. The girls are beginning to like him. I think you'd better get used to the idea.

DOT: I don't want to grow up. EVER!

RANDALL: At the rate you're going you won't have to worry!

INEZ: Now listen, you two, let's not get into a squabble! Now that Dad has fixed it so Bobby won't have to go to jail for stealing the judge's car, how about I take you both out for a soda?

RANDALL: Gosh, Darlene, you get rich all of a sudden?

INEZ: I get fifty cents an hour baby-sitting the Carter twins!

NORMA: They're such generous people!

INEZ: What am I going to do with all that money?

DOT: I can think of a couple of things right off the top of my head!

INEZ: Silly! Let's go!

RANDALL: Last one on their bike is a rotten egg!

INEZ: You're on! *(INEZ and RANDALL race off SL.)*

NORMA: Susie, aren't you going for ice cream?

DOT: Daddy? Do I HAVE to grow up?

ROB: Don't worry, sweetheart. You'll always be my little girl!

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DOT: *(Hugging ROB.)* Gosh! You're the best daddy in the whole, wide world!

NORMA: Now go on, Susie.

DOT: *(Racing off SL.)* Bye!

NORMA: Oh, Henry, do you think Bobby learned his lesson?

ROB: I'm sure he has, Martha. After all, ANYbody can make a mistake. He never really meant any harm taking the Judge's car.

NORMA: I guess that makes all the difference, doesn't it?

ROB: It certainly does.

NORMA: You know, Mr. Grady, I wouldn't mind a little ice cream of my own!

ROB: Last one to the car's a rotten egg!

(ROB and NORMA race off SL. MAX, who sports a head of shaggy hair, enters SR holding "Applause" sign.)

VOICE: That concludes the 1975 season of *Leave It to Daddy!* And now, audience, America's number one TV family, the Gradys!

(ROB, NORMA, INEZ, RANDALL, and DOT enter SL, holding hands. They move to CS, bow, and raise hands. As applause dies, Inez and Randall exit SL. Rob and Norma hold hands and speak quietly for a moment. MAX exits SR. Norma gives Rob a note. He then notices DOT standing DSL. She glares at him. Norma looks at Dot and defiantly kisses Rob on the cheek, then exits SL. Rob moves to Dot, who runs off SL. Inez appears at the patio door, watching. Randall enters SL, cautiously. He sees everyone is gone, so he crosses to couch, and pulls out a pipe. He steals off SL as the CURTAIN closes.)

End of Scene 1

End of Freeview

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